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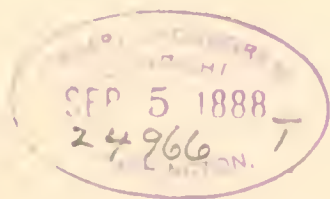
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1857

JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN.



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JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN.

Calhoun, JOHN CALDWELL, an American statesman, was born in Abbeville District (now county), South Carolina, March 18, 1782. He was of Irish Presbyterian descent. He graduated at Yale College in 1804 with honours, and became a successful lawyer. Entering congress as a representative from his native state in 1811, he at once took a prominent place before the country as a supporter of the measures which led to the war of 1812-15 with Great Britain. In 1816 he supported a bill for establishing a protective tariff, and reported to congress a measure for the creation of a national bank. In 1817 he joined Monroe's cabinet as Secretary of War, and in 1819, at the request of congress, submitted a plan for an extensive system of internal improvements. His labours in the reorganisation of the war department were of extreme value to the country. He was vice-president of the United States under the presidency of John Q. Adams (1825-29), and under that of General Jackson from 1829 to 1832, when he resigned the office. He prepared the first draft of the *South Carolina Exposition* of 1829, a document of 56 printed pages, which distinctly marks the commencement of a new stage in Mr Calhoun's career. In this paper he announced the doctrine that a state can nullify unconstitutional laws, the principal reason set forth for the proposed exercise of this alleged

right being the differing interests of different sections of the country, free trade being regarded as highly advantageous to the more southern states, and a protective tariff being conceded to be no less desirable for other parts of the country. The breach in his personal friendship for President Jackson (1830) completely freed him from old party affiliations, and left him free for a new political career. His *Address to the People of South Carolina* (1831) set forth with great force his newly developed theory of state rights. The passage by South Carolina in 1832 of the nullification ordinance was the occasion of his resignation of the vice-presidency, and of his entering the United States senate. Mr Calhoun accepted the compromise tariff of 1833. The remainder of his political career was that of a leader of the states-rights movement, and a champion of the real or supposed interests of the slave-holding states. More clearly than almost any other man in the country he understood the radical differences then existing between the social and industrial systems of the northern and southern states, and foresaw the bloody consequences which might sooner or later result from those differences. He left the senate in 1843, and in the following year became Secretary of State under President Tyler, in which capacity he signed a treaty by which it was proposed that Texas should be annexed to the Union. In 1845 he resumed his place in the senate. He strenuously opposed the war of 1846-47 with Mexico. He died at Washington of pulmonary disease, combined with a cardiac affection, March 31, 1850. Mr Calhoun, though not a man of great learning, possessed high intellectual power, fine logical ability, enormous capacity for labour, keen political foresight,

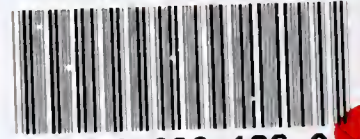
and strong will; and his personal integrity and moral purity were never called in question. The *Life of Calhoun*, by R. S. Jenkins (1851), contains most of the accessible details of his personal career. See also his collected works (6 vols. 1853-54), with a Life by R. K. Crallé, and H. von Holst's *John C. Calhoun* (1882). The latter book discusses the leading evidences of Calhoun's career as viewed from an anti-slavery standpoint. With Henry Clay and Daniel Webster he formed 'the great triumvirate' in the sense of a close political union, for the three great orators were never closely associated, and were often in antagonism. Mr Calhoun seriously regarded slavery as a blessing to all concerned with it; and the systematic defence of that institution was the main purpose of almost all his public acts during the latter half of his life. Mr Calhoun was tall and slender, with a thin, deeply lined and angular face. His bright and expressive eyes when he was speaking in public added much to the effect of his impassioned oratory. He was a brilliant talker, and had a large following of warm personal friends.







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